

*Priority***CONFIDENTIAL**

OPERATIONS GROUP FILE

CONFIDENTIAL 141358Z DEC 79 STAFF

CITE FBIS/LONDON 20606

TO: PRIORITY FBIS.

REF: FBIS 09776

RYBAT

DEC 14 9 33 AM '79

(EC)

25X1

Report

FOLLOWING FROM BBC:

1. PERSIAN SERVICE: ONE AND A HALF HOURS A DAY IN THREE TRANSMISSIONS (15 MINUTES AT DAWN; HALF HOUR EARLY AFTERNOON; 3/4 HOUR IN EVENING). PROGRAM LARGELY CONSISTS OF NEWS AND CURRENT AFFAIRS ON A WORLDWIDE BASIS BUT WITH IRAN FIGURING PROMINENTLY AT PRESENT. MATERIAL DRAWN FROM NORMAL SOURCES-- MONITORING, NEWS AGENCIES, CORRESPONDENTS, BRITISH PRESS COMMENT ETC. NO PARTICULAR PITCH; PROGRAM AIMS TO PRESENT THE FACTS AS OBJECTIVELY AS POSSIBLE. IT HAS BEEN QUITE FREQUENTLY ATTACKED BY THE NEW REGIME.

NO PROPER AUDIENCE FIGURES AVAILABLE BUT MUCH CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE OF LISTENING--FROM VISITORS AND CORRESPONDENT AND FROM SUBSTANTIAL MAIL-BAG. REACTION SEEMS TO BE MIXED. SIGNAL IS AUDIBLE ON MEDIUM AND SHORT WAVES.

NOTE: THE PERSIAN SERVICE HAS UNTIL RECENTLY BEEN SUPPLYING THE USIS OFFICE IN LONDON WITH COPIES OF ALL CURRENT AFFAIRS ITEMS ON IRAN. THESE SHOULD BE AVAILABLE IN WASHINGTON.

ARABIC SERVICE: THE BIGGEST SINGLE FOREIGN LANGUAGE SERVICE IN THE BBC, BROADCASTING FOR NINE HOURS A DAY. THE TRANSMISSIONS COVER FROM MOROCCO TO THE GULF WITH WIDELY DIFFERING TIME-ZONES AND THIS IS A MAIN REASON FOR THE EXTENT OF THE SERVICE. AUDIENCE RESEARCH SURVEYS HAVE INDICATED A LARGE AUDIENCE PUT AT ABOUT FIVE MILLION REGULAR LISTENERS (ONCE A WEEK OR MORE). SIGNAL AVAILABLE ON MEDIUM AS WELL AS

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 2 FBIS/LONDON 20606 CONFIDENTIAL
SHORT WAVES EXCEPT IN NORTH AFRICA.

URDU SERVICE: ONE AND A QUARTER HOURS A DAY. A FAIRLY RECENT SURVEY INDICATED AN URBAN AUDIENCE OF TWO AND A QUARTER MILLION REGULAR LISTENERS. THERE IS A STRONG HISTORICAL INHERITANCE AND MANY LISTENERS HAVE FAMILY LINKS WITH THE UK.

2. OTHER SERVICES LIKE THE BENGALI AND SOMALI COVER MUSLIM AUDIENCES BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY SO.

3. THERE IS A GENERAL POINT. BBC THINKS IT TAKES ABOUT FIVE YEARS TO BUILD UP AN AUDIENCE (HENCE THE STRUGGLE WITH POLITICIANS WHO THINK AUDIENCES CAN BE TURNED ON AND OFF LIKE A TAP). BROADCASTS HAVE TO BE THERE IN GOOD TIMES AND BAD TO GAIN LOYALTIES--AND TO BE SEEN TO BE OBJECTIVE.

4. BBC HAS NO CURRENT PLANS FOR EXPANSION OF THESE SERVICES.

5. RVW 14 DEC 85.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL